

1. (amended) An absorbent article, comprising:

an absorbent chassis defining a longitudinal axis, a transverse axis, front and back waist edges parallel to the transverse axis, opposite side edges extending between the front and back waist edges, a front waist region contiguous with the front waist edge, a back waist region contiguous with the back waist edge, and a crotch region which extends between and interconnects the front and back waist regions, the front waist region defining a pair of transversely opposed front side panels and a front center panel positioned between and interconnecting the front side panels, the back waist region defining a pair of transversely opposed back side panels and a back center panel positioned between and interconnecting the back side panels, at least one pair of side panels being elastomeric in a direction generally parallel to the transverse axis, the absorbent chassis comprising a bodyside liner, an outer cover bonded to the bodyside liner, and an absorbent assembly disposed between the bodyside liner and the outer cover; and

a fastening system for releasably securing the absorbent article in a pant-like configuration, the fastening system comprising first and second fastening components disposed on the back side panels and adapted to releasably engage first and second mating fastening components disposed on the front side panels;

wherein [the] a transverse distance between the first and second fastening components is substantially equal to [the] a transverse distance between the first and second mating fastening components.

2. (amended) The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein each front and back side panel has a waist end edge parallel to the transverse axis and forming part of one of the waist edges and an opposite leg end edge, and each front and back side panel is elastomeric from the waist end edge to the leg end edge.

4. (amended) The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the absorbent article comprises elastomeric components transversely disposed between the first and second fastening components and the absorbent assembly and elastomeric components transversely disposed between the first and second mating fastening components and the absorbent assembly.

6. (amended) The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the absorbent article has an overall length dimension and each of the front and back side panels [have] has an average length dimension that is about 20 percent or greater of the overall length dimension.
  
9. (amended) The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the pant configuration defines a waist opening and leg openings and engagement of the fastening components and mating fastening components defines refastenable seams that cover about 90 to about 98 percent of [the] a distance between the waist opening and the leg openings.

14. (amended) An absorbent article, comprising:

an absorbent chassis defining a longitudinal axis, a transverse axis, front and back waist edges parallel to the transverse axis, opposite side edges extending between the front and back waist edges, a front waist region contiguous with the front waist edge, a back waist region contiguous with the back waist edge, and a crotch region which extends between and interconnects the front and back waist regions, the absorbent chassis comprising:

a rectangular composite structure having opposite linear side edges parallel to the longitudinal axis and opposite linear end edges parallel to the transverse axis, the composite structure comprising a bodyside liner, an outer cover bonded to the bodyside liner, and an absorbent assembly disposed between the bodyside liner and the outer cover;

first and second front side panels bonded to the composite structure in the front waist region;

first and second back side panels bonded to the composite structure in the back waist region;

a fastening system for releasably securing the absorbent article in a pant-like configuration, the fastening system comprising first and second fastening components connected to the respective first and second back side panels and adapted to releasably engage first and second mating fastening components connected to the respective first and second front side panels; and

elastomeric components transversely disposed between the fastening components and the absorbent assembly;

wherein [the] a transverse distance between the first and second fastening components is substantially equal to [the] a transverse distance between the first and second mating fastening components.

20. (amended) The absorbent article of claim 14, wherein the [pant] pant-like configuration defines a waist opening and leg openings and engagement of the fastening components and mating fastening components defines refastenable seams, the refastenable seams covering about 90 to about 98 percent of [the] a distance between the waist opening and the leg openings.

21. (amended) An absorbent article, comprising:

an absorbent chassis defining a longitudinal axis, a transverse axis, first and second waist edges parallel to the transverse axis, opposite side edges extending between the first and second waist edges, a first waist region contiguous with the first waist edge, a second waist region contiguous with the second waist edge, and a crotch region which extends between and interconnects the first and second waist regions, the absorbent chassis comprising:

a rectangular composite structure having opposite linear side edges parallel to the longitudinal axis and opposite linear end edges parallel to the transverse axis, the composite structure comprising a bodyside liner, an outer cover bonded to the bodyside liner, and an absorbent assembly disposed between the bodyside liner and the outer cover;

first and second elastomeric side panels bonded to the composite structure in the first waist region;

first and second elastomeric side panels bonded to the composite structure in the second waist region;

support members bonded to and extending transversely outward from the first and second elastomeric side panels in the second waist region; and

a fastening system for releasably securing the absorbent article in a pant-like configuration, the fastening system comprising first and second fastening components disposed on the support members and adapted to releasably engage first and second mating fastening components disposed on the respective first and second elastomeric side panels in the first waist region;

wherein the elastomeric side panels in the first waist region are longitudinally spaced from the elastomeric side panels in the second waist region, and [the] a width of the elastomeric side panels in the first waist region is the same as [the] a width of the elastomeric side panels in the second waist region.

29. (amended) A training pant for use in training a child to use the toilet, comprising:

an absorbent chassis defining a longitudinal axis, a transverse axis, an overall length dimension parallel to the longitudinal axis, front and back waist edges parallel to the transverse axis, opposite side edges extending between the front and back waist edges, a front waist region contiguous with the front waist edge, a back waist region contiguous with the back waist edge, and a crotch region which extends between and interconnects the front and back waist regions, the absorbent chassis comprising:

a rectangular composite structure having opposite linear side edges parallel to the longitudinal axis and opposite linear end edges parallel to the transverse axis, the composite structure comprising:

(a) a liquid permeable bodyside liner;

(b) a liquid impermeable outer cover bonded to the bodyside liner, the outer cover comprising a liquid impermeable inner layer and a nonwoven outer layer;

(c) an outer cover graphic disposed on the outer cover;

(d) an absorbent assembly comprising hydrophilic fibers disposed between the bodyside liner and the outer cover; and

(e) leg elastic members longitudinally aligned along the side edges of the composite structure;

first and second front side panels bonded to the composite structure in the front waist region, each front side panel having a distal edge, an interior portion between the distal edge and the composite structure, a waist end edge parallel to the transverse axis and forming part of the front waist edge, and a leg end edge forming part of the side edge, the front side panels having an average length dimension that is about 20 percent or greater of the overall length dimension of the absorbent [article] chassis;

first and second back side panels bonded to the composite structure in the back waist region and longitudinally spaced from the first and second front side panels, each back side panel having a distal edge, an interior portion between the distal edge and the composite structure, a waist end edge parallel to the transverse axis and forming part of the back waist edge, and a leg end edge forming part of the side edge, the back side panels having an average length dimension that is about 20 percent or greater of the overall length dimension of the absorbent [article] chassis; and